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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

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R 291040Z JUL 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7961
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Irene Szalay DATE 1/26/82
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: KY BLASTS THIEU; CLAIMS 142 SIGNED ENDORSEMENTS

REF: SAIGON 11992

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: AT A DINNER JULY 27 FOR PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS VICE PRESIDENT KY RENEWED ATTACK ON PRESIDENT THIEU IN PARTICULARLY SHARP TERMS. KY ALSO ASSERTED THAT HE HELD ENDORSEMENTS FROM 142 COUNCILORS, ADMITTED THAT HE HAS SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO VALIDATE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER DUE TO OBSTRUCTION FROM PROVINCE CHIEFS BUT STATED THAT HE IS DETERMINED TO OVERCOME HIS DIFFICULTIES. KY'S CLAIMS OF SUPPORT FROM PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS DOUBTLESS ARE INFLATED. THEY PROBABLY REPRESENT AN EFFORT BY KY TO SET THE STAGE FOR A STRONG PROTEST AGAINST THIEU IN THE EVENT HE FAILS TO QUALIFY AS A CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. AT A JULY 27 DINNER FOR PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS AT THE TAN SON NHUT AIRFORCE OFFICERS CLUB, VICE PRESIDENT KY, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, ATTACKED PRESIDENT THIEU AS "STUPID" FOR

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HIS INSISTENCE ON A POLICY OF MILITARY VICTORY, AND ASSERTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD LOST ALL PRESTIGE AT HOME AND ABROAD. KY ALSO CHARGED THAT THIEU HAD BETRAYED KY'S TRUST BY OBSTRUCTING HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY AND CLAIMED CREDIT FOR THIEU'S ELECTION IN 1967, NOTING THAT HE HAD PERSUADED HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SUPPORTERS TO VALIDATE THE 1967 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS DESPITE THEIR PERSONAL OBJECTIONS TO THIEU.

3. KY ALSO DESCRIBED THE ARMY AS A "RAGGED BODY, CRIPPLED BY DISSENSION AND DIVISION", ACCUSED GENERALS OF "CORRUPTION AND PILFERAGE" AND PREDICTED A COMMUNIST VICTORY IF THIEU'S LEADERSHIP CONTINUED. KY DEMANDED THAT "ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THE LEADERSHIP MUST BE CHANGED" BUT NOTED THAT "IT'S BETTER THAT THIS CHANGE BE MADE THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES" LEST "THE PEOPLE RISE AND DESTROY EVERYTHING."

4. DURING THE DINNER, KY REPORTEDLY CLAIMED THAT HE HAD BY THAT TIME COLLECTED 142 SIGNED ENDORSEMENTS FROM PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO VALIDATE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER TO QUALIFY AS A CANDIDATE DUE TO THE OBSTRUCTION OF PROVINCE CHIEFS. HOWEVER KY PREDICTED THAT HE WOULD OVERCOME HIS DIFFICULTIES AND NOTED THAT HIS LETTER OF JULY 26 TO PRIME MINISTER KHIEM HAD CAUSED KHIEM TO ISSUE HIS JULY 27 INSTRUCTION ORDERING PROVINCE CHIEFS TO SPEED UP THEIR CERTIFICATION OF ENDORSEMENTS (REFTEL).

5. ACCORDING TO DIFFERING NEWS ACCOUNTS, KY'S DINNER WAS ATTENDED BY EITHER 50 OR 105 PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS WHO WERE PRESENT IN SAIGON FOR A NATIONAL CONVENTION OF A PRIVATE ASSOCIATION OF PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS. KY'S STAFF APPARENTLY ATTEMPTED TO SOLICIT ENDORSEMENTS FROM THEIR GUESTS, WITH PRESENTLY UNDETERMINED SUCCESS. DURING THE DINNER, SEVERAL COUNCILORS ALSO PUBLICLY DESCRIBED INCIDENTS OF PRESSURE BY PROVINCE CHIEFS ON KY SUPPORTERS.
BUNKER